

**Grade:** K-6<sup>th</sup> grades

**Time:** ½ - 1 hour

**Season:** All

## **Tree Hunt**

### **National Science Teaching Standards**

**A. Science as INQUIRY**

**C. LIFE Science**

### **Objective:**

- Students will learn to identify some of the common trees of Iowa.
- Students will be making a key of the trees from their own observations.
- Students will take a quiz using their own keys.

### **Pre Activity:**

- View the Eyewitness video, “Trees”
- Write a business letter to Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Forest Bureau, Wallace Building, Des Moines, Iowa, asking for copies of the pamphlet, “20 Common Trees of Iowa.” They are free. After receiving them take a hike around the school grounds and/or the community trying to identify the trees you see.
- Each student selects a tree on the playground or at home. From the tree the student needs to collect: bark or a bark rubbing, seeds or pine cones, leaves or needles, branch, circumference of the tree. Bring to school in a baggie. Using “20 Common Trees of Iowa” booklets try to identify the tree. Label your bag with tree name. Share bags with classmates.

### **Equipment:**

- Tree Identification Trail Guides
- Worksheet (1 per student)
- Pencils

### **Procedure:**

1. Go over the worksheet with the students to clarify terms. It may be helpful to show examples of simple and compound leaves and alternate and opposite arrangements. An alternative would be to have students use only objectives to describe the tree and not use the worksheet provided.
2. Lead the students down the Tree Hunt Trail. At each identification post have students note unique characteristics of the tree using their worksheet. Encourage students to use their senses when exploring the tree and to make comparisons from the other trees they have seen. The students should make their own key of the trees.
3. When they have finished “keying” the first group of trees on the trail, have them do the second portion of the trail as the quiz. Using their keys, the students should try to identify each tree themselves. They should write the answers down on the back of their worksheet.
4. When the quiz is finished, go over the answers and keys with the students.

**Post Activity:**

- Make leaf prints or leaf and bark rubbings of each tree or trees found around your community.
- Adopt a tree on the school grounds and note the various changes taking place throughout the seasons. What lives on the tree or depends on the tree? What is the importance of that tree to people?
- Go on a tree hunt in your community. What kind of trees are found? Make a map of where the different trees are located.
- Identify trees on the school grounds. Take a younger student on a Tree Hike at recess.

**Post Discussion:**

- Discuss the life cycle of trees and the importance of each stage to the habitat.
- Have students share other life cycles that are familiar with.
- Discuss ways trees are used.
- Discuss deforestation and reforestation.
- Discuss responsible use of trees. How might the students contribute that responsibility?